

BEVERLY EAVES PERDUE

GOVERNOR



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North Carolina Visitor Spending Rises to Record \$16.9 Billion in 2008

Gov. Bev Perdue announced today that domestic visitors to and within North Carolina spent a record \$16.9 billion in 2008, an increase of 2.1 percent from 2007 and higher than the previous record of \$16.5 billion, set in 2007.

The visitor spending figures are the preliminary results of an annual study conducted by the U.S. Travel Association for the N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development. The study uses sales and tax revenue data and employment figures to determine the overall impact of visitor spending in North Carolina.

"The tourism industry is a critical economic engine for North Carolina – and this continued growth in revenues is a positive sign," said Gov. Perdue. "From Murphy to Manteo, the Tar Heel state has countless treasures that attract visitors year after year."

State tax revenues from visitors increased by 3.5 percent from 2007, rising to \$843.2 million in 2008. Local tax revenues also increased, gaining 2.5 percent from 2007 to a total \$542.3 million in 2008. During the last five years, visitor spending has increased 27.3 percent while state and local tax revenue is up 20.7 percent.

Highlights of the U.S. Travel Association study include:

2008 total visitor spending saw an increase of 2.1 percent to \$16.9 billion, up from \$16.5 billion in 2007.

The travel and tourism industry directly employs more than 190,000 North Carolinians, which is